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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
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Summary record of the 1518th meeting
Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 14 July 2017, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Leinarte

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention (*continued*)

Combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of Nigeria (CEDAW/C/NGA/7-8; CEDAW/C/NGA/Q/7-8 and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Nigeria took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Ms. Jummai Alhassan** (Nigeria), introducing the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of Nigeria, said that, in accordance with the concluding observations issued by the Committee in 2008, the Government had adopted a strategic implementation framework and an action plan for operationalizing the national gender policy. In addition, advocacy work, awareness-raising, legal reforms, judicial measures, gender policy development and gender mainstreaming activities had been carried out by ministries, departments and agencies to ensure that the Convention was fully implemented.

3. The measures outlined had resulted in the adoption of the Violence against Persons (Prohibition) Act, which prohibited female genital mutilation and other harmful traditional practices, the Lagos State Protection against Domestic Violence Law, the Anambra State Gender and Equal Opportunities Law, the Cross River State Law to Prohibit Girl Child Marriages and Female Genital Circumcision or Genital Mutilation, the Ekiti State Gender-Based Violence (Prohibition) Law, the Imo State Gender and Equal Opportunities Law No. 7, the HIV and AIDS (Anti-Discrimination) Act, the Jigawa State Gender Policy Action Plan, the Ekiti State Gender Policy and the Lagos State Protection of People Living with HIV and Affected by AIDS Law.

4. The proportion of women political appointees had risen from 10 per cent in the period 2007-2011 to 33 per cent in 2013-2015. Between 2013 and 2015, four women had been appointed as special advisers, four women had been appointed justices of the Supreme Court, 15 out of 70 justices of the Court of Appeal had been women and around 30 per cent of the total number of state High Court judges had been women. The first woman Chief Justice of Nigeria and the first woman President of the Court of Appeal had been appointed; women chief judges had been appointed in five states; and the head of the civil service and the Acting Secretary to the Government of the Federation had all been women. More recently, women had occupied 6 out of a total of 36 ministerial posts and 13 out of a total of 91 positions as heads of agencies.

5. In the area of sexual and reproductive health, the prevalence of HIV/AIDS among pregnant women aged between 15 and 24 years had fallen from 5.4 per cent in 2000 to 4.1 per cent in 2010. The number of clinics that offered free antiretroviral drugs had risen from 143 in 2011 to 1,057 at the end of 2014. Although the proportion of women who had an unmet need for family planning had risen from 17 per cent in 2004 to 25.1 per cent in 2012, *The Millennium Development Goals Report* for 2015 indicated that it had declined to 22.2 per cent in 2014. The contraceptive prevalence rate had risen slightly from 17.3 per cent in 2012 to 18.5 per cent in 2015. Between 2008 and 2015, the maternal mortality rate had fallen from 545 per 100,000 live births in 2008 to 243 per 100,000 live births in 2014. Some 68.9 per cent of pregnant women had received at least one antenatal visit from skilled health personnel, while 60.6 per cent of pregnant women had received at least four such visits. Owing to the effective implementation of the midwives services scheme in rural areas, the proportion of births attended by skilled health-care staff had risen from 45 per cent in 1990 to 58.6 per cent in 2014.

6. As at December 2016, more than 100,000 persons had been killed, 2.1 million had been internally displaced, and over $9 billion worth of property had been destroyed by the actions of Boko Haram in Borno state. A total of 106 of the Chibok schoolgirls who had been abducted by Boko Haram insurgents had been rehabilitated and reunited with their families. In 2016, the Government had rebuilt thousands of homes and had resettled and rehabilitated around 2 million internally displaced persons. The Government was taking steps to create jobs for internally displaced persons by establishing training programmes and agricultural factories. In order to protect young people from extremism and intolerance,

a vigorous youth deradicalization programme was being carried out. Under the World Bank FADAMA III programme, goats and sheep were being distributed to 5,320 households affected by the Boko Haram insurgency in Yobe state. On 15 February 2017, the Food and Agriculture Organization had reported that it had provided training in dry-season irrigation farming to 8,800 returning internally displaced persons in Borno state. According to an estimate given by the United Nations Development Programme, around $1 billion was needed to rehabilitate around 6.9 million people who had been affected by the actions of Boko Haram insurgents in the North East. As part of its efforts to provide protection to 65,000 Nigerian refugees in Cameroon, the Federal Government had signed a tripartite agreement with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Government of Cameroon.

7. **Ms. Schulz** said that the Committee wished to express its concern about the State party's complex and lengthy legislative process, which had allowed discriminatory provisions to remain in the Constitution and in national law for decades. Some 32 years after it had been ratified with no reservations, the Convention had still not been incorporated into federal or state law. All efforts to pass laws to implement it had failed, including the attempt to push through the gender and equal opportunities bill.

8. The constitutional review process, which was ongoing and had no time limit, could be used to increase the effectiveness of the federal system to ensure that the State party complied with its international human rights commitments. Noting that citizenship, labour, patents and pensions but not human rights had been placed on the list of items over which the federal government had exclusive authority under the Constitution — the exclusive legislative list — she asked whether the State party would consider including all human rights issues, including those pertaining to children's rights, women's rights and issues surrounding gender-based violence, in the list to ensure that a uniform framework of protection existed throughout the country. She asked whether a clear timetable for conducting the much-needed constitutional review would be established, whether the discriminatory provisions contained in section 26 (2) (a) and section 29 (4) of the Constitution would be revised or removed, whether the State party intended to remove the discriminatory provision concerning women in the armed forces from sections 42 (1) and 42 (3) of the Constitution, whether it could be inferred from the reference to "citizens of Nigeria" in section 41 (1) of the Constitution that foreigners were not protected against discrimination and whether there were plans in place to introduce a clear definition of discrimination based on sex that complied with article 1 of the Convention. The Committee wished to know whether the Government would advocate for the adoption of the gender and equal opportunities bill, which would incorporate most of the Convention into national law and, if so, what timetable would be followed and what measures would be taken to ensure that the bill was adopted.

9. The national law reform process had not only provided for a complete audit of discriminatory laws but also put forward proposals for their revision or abolition. Although the State party report had appeared to indicate that the audit was before the Attorney General and the Ministry of Justice, the replies to the list of issues stated that the Attorney General had approved a review of the entire body of laws conducted by a committee of technical experts. In view of that situation, she asked whether the recommendations made by the National Law Reform Commission would be revisited to ensure that the various laws identified in the audit would be reviewed and whether a clear timetable for the presentation of the corresponding bills to Parliament would be established.

10. She asked whether the various statutory, customary and religious laws that applied to personal status issues would be harmonised so that all women would benefit from the same protections. Noting that the judiciary was said to be beset by widespread corruption, dysfunction and sexism, she asked how judges and traditional chiefs were trained to handle cases in a gender sensitive and competent way and whether plans were in place to collect data on women's access to justice, including in rural areas, how many women requested legal aid and how many such requests were turned down owing to a lack of funds. She asked what measures were taken to ensure that women and girls belonging to vulnerable groups had access to the justice system and whether legal aid was available from domestic resources or was still dependent on external donors such as the Japan Social Development

Fund. Lastly, she wondered whether the State party would consider approving the amendment of article 20 (1) of the Convention on the meeting time of the Committee.

11. **Ms. Jummai Alhassan** (Nigeria) said that a number of proposed provisions contained in the gender and equal opportunities bill, which had undergone a second reading, conflicted with some of the provisions of the Constitution, which was the supreme law of the nation. Before giving the bill a public hearing, attempts were being made to iron out the inconsistencies in order to pave the way for its adoption. Civil society organizations were helping Nigerian women to advocate for the adoption of the bill. There was no longer any sexism in the judiciary. As had been pointed out during the opening statement, the Chief Justice and the President of the Court of Appeal were both women, as were a number of chief judges and chief magistrates. Funding was set aside for legal aid in the budgets of the Ministry of Justice and the National Judicial Council.

12. **Mr. Ladan** (Nigeria) said that the constitutional review was expected to be completed by the end of 2017. During the previous week, submissions concerning the key amendments required in the areas of human rights and gender discrimination had been made and, two weeks previously, an updated review of all discriminatory laws, policies and practices affecting women and children had been carried out by the National Centre for Women Development. The review in question would supplement the report to be issued by the Nigerian Law Reform Commission, which had initially been submitted as an interim report for the consideration by the Attorney General. Under the federal system, the federal government was not empowered to impose legal, constitutional or administrative decisions on states. The federal and state governments both had jurisdiction over issues involving gender discrimination, women's empowerment and women's access to justice, which was why a significant amount of time was required for legislative reform to take place.

13. The exclusive legislative list concerned only items over which the federal government had exclusive jurisdiction. As issues involving women's rights fell under the jurisdictions of the federal government and the state governments, it would not be necessary or productive to include them on the exclusive legislative list. The national gender policy would be carried out in accordance with an implementation plan containing a time frame, indicators and actions to be taken at the federal, state and local government levels. The review of the plan currently under way was expected to be completed by the end of the year, after which the timescales for the implementation of the national gender policy would become clearer. During the review process, consideration would be given to the possibility of amending the relevant sections of the Constitution and the language of section 26 (2) (a), which had been the subject of an intensive campaign by civil society organizations, to ensure that all individuals' human rights were fully protected, including those of foreigners who married Nigerian citizens and vice versa. Under section 14 (2) (b) of the Constitution, the fundamental human rights of all individuals, regardless of whether or not they were citizens of Nigeria, were protected.

14. **Ms. Jummai Alhassan** (Nigeria) said that the proposal to amend legislation to give equal rights to women married to foreigners was before the Legislative Assembly. Changes to the law on marriage could be made only by continuing to pursue campaigns to raise religious leaders' awareness of the importance of amending the legislation in question. One such campaign was the HeForShe campaign, which had recently been launched in Nigeria.

15. **Ms. Schulz** said that it would be useful to hear more about the difficulties and points of contention preventing the adoption of the gender and equal opportunities bill and about the State party's strategy to tackle the sexism and gender bias shown by certain judges in the adjudication of civil and criminal cases. While she understood that dialogue was the key to overcoming the obstacles preventing the incorporation of the Convention into domestic law, the fact remained that the complexities of the federal system had for too long deprived a large proportion of the population of protection of their human rights.

16. **Ms. Haidar** said that she understood the importance of advocacy in bringing about changes in mindsets and in legislation, as she, too, hailed from a religiously diverse country, namely Lebanon. She drew the State party's attention to the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constituted incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence and the Beirut Declaration on "Faith for Rights" and its

related 18 commitments, which could serve as useful tools in encouraging different faith communities to work together to promote human rights.

17. **Ms. Ameline** said that the State party was to be commended on having secured the release of a number of the Chibok schoolgirls abducted by Boko Haram. However, the weakening of positive law in 12 of the country's 36 states was a worrying trend and, in some states, had led to a questioning of the very foundation of women's rights. The current climate of instability in the State party pointed to the necessity of strengthening positive law by guaranteeing access to justice, clarifying legislation and expediting the revision of the Constitution or, at the very least, provisions that discriminated against women.

18. **Ms. Jummai Alhassan** (Nigeria) said that the Chibok girls who had been rescued were currently enrolled in a rehabilitation and reintegration programme and were due to resume their studies at a school outside the state in September 2017. In the interim, the girls had undergone psychosocial therapy and had attended refresher courses designed to help them catch up with their fellow students before they re-entered the formal education system. The girls had also been provided with vocational training, as many of them remained apprehensive about returning to school, given the circumstances of their abduction. The Government was aware that it would take some girls longer than others to feel comfortable with the idea of returning to school and would continue to provide them with the necessary care and support.

19. The Government hoped to draw inspiration from the Rabat Plan of Action, the Beirut Declaration and the Lebanese approach as it set about intensifying its advocacy efforts. One of the points of contention preventing the adoption of the gender and equal opportunities bill was the issue of inheritance, as the provisions of the bill conflicted with customary law in the South and with Islamic law in the North. Despite the Supreme Court having upheld the right of women to inherit in a landmark case, the right was seldom recognized in the South East. Muslims living in the North abided by the inheritance provisions of the Qur'an, which were at variance with those contained in the bill. More advocacy was needed to convince the Muslim community and the legislators in the North of the country to accept the provisions of the bill. The Government acknowledged that there were shortcomings in the implementation of laws and in the enforcement of court rulings and was working to remedy them.

20. **Mr. Ladan** (Nigeria) said that, in Nigeria, the judiciary was gender-sensitive and took the specific needs of women into account when processing cases of gender-based violence, as was reflected in the court rulings handed down. Due to the word limit imposed by the Committee, it had not been possible to include sex-disaggregated data on access to justice in its original written replies. However, they had since been updated to include the data requested in the form of an appendix.

21. **Ms. Schulz** said that she was surprised to hear that data on women's access to justice were in fact available, despite the original written replies having stated the opposite. It would have been useful to receive those data ahead of the interactive dialogue.

22. **Ms. Rana** said that the Boko Haram insurgency had led to forced displacement of women and girls, deprived them of their means of livelihood, disrupted their education and exposed them to sexual violence, exploitation and abuse. Consequently, an increased number of internally displaced women and girls had been forced to seek shelter in various camps for internally displaced persons across the country. The Committee had learned from alternative sources that both Boko Haram and government forces had occupied schools, putting students' safety and education at risk. The alleged presence of those forces had a disproportionate effect on girls, who were at greater risk of suffering sexual violence. The various initiatives to protect girls and to support their education were clearly inadequate in the face of the gravity of the insurgency. The delegation might confirm whether government forces had been using schools for military purposes and explain how it planned to protect students if that was the case. Given that access to sexual and reproductive health-care services in camps for internally displaced persons was somewhat limited, she asked what steps the State party was taking to guarantee women and girls affected by the conflict, particularly survivors of sexual violence, equal access to those services.

23. Concerns had also been raised over the indiscriminate screening methods used by the Nigerian military to detain persons suspected of being associated with the insurgency. Some women, including pregnant women, had reportedly been detained for many months without being charged, and many women reportedly struggled to gain access to resources, faced stigmatization and became socially isolated following their release. She asked how the State party planned to prevent the arbitrary and indefinite detention of women, ensure their protection and safety during and after detention and guarantee international agencies access to prison facilities for women for the purpose of inspecting their detention conditions.

24. Alternative sources estimated that 70 per cent of the small arms and light weapons in West Africa were located in Nigeria, which served to fuel armed conflict and to promote gender-based violence and insurgencies. The resulting insecurity limited women's capacity to participate in public life, posed a threat to human security and left women open to human rights violations. Given that Nigeria had been the first country to ratify the Arms Trade Treaty, she asked how the State party intended to monitor and halt the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

25. She welcomed the adoption of the second national action plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security in May 2017, as it demonstrated the State party's commitment to guaranteeing the security of women and girls affected by conflicts and to enhancing their participation in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and post-conflict efforts. However, although the second national action plan covered emerging issues such as violent extremism and the gaps identified in the first national action plan, its implementation remained a major challenge. She asked how the State party planned to overcome the obstacles impeding the effective implementation of the second national action plan, how many subsidiary action plans had been adopted at the state level and what was the timeline for implementing the national action plan in all states. She also wished to know whether the State party had earmarked funding for its implementation and how it envisaged increasing women's participation in peacebuilding, in keeping with the Committee's general recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations (CEDAW/C/GC/30).

26. **Ms. Ameline** said that, despite the State party's good intentions, it still seemed to lack the capacity and the necessary budgetary resources to deal with crisis situations, growing disparities in the rights protections afforded by the different states and the increased strain on basic services attributable to a steep rise in the country's population.

27. It would be useful to learn more about the State party's strategy for dealing with crisis situations. The destabilizing effect of terrorism, environmental crises and high migration levels on the State party necessitated the strengthening of its institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women's rights, the allocation of sufficient budgetary resources to guarantee their effective functioning and the introduction of a comprehensive statistical system. She asked when the State party might roll out such a system and introduce gender budgeting.

28. Recalling that the State party had committed to expanding the local support and information services available to women in 2015, she asked whether it had translated that commitment into action. Furthermore, there appeared to be insufficient coordination between the federal and state authorities in the implementation of the various plans and strategies adopted in the health, employment and development fields. She asked whether the State party had considered introducing coordination mechanisms to promote greater coherence in the implementation of such plans and strategies.

29. Lastly, recalling that women's rights were an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, she asked what progress the State party had made towards mainstreaming women's rights in all its administrative and institutional mechanisms. The delegation might also explain the procedure for determining the portion of the budget to be allocated to activities to promote and protect women's rights and indicate whether the State party had considered creating a separate budget line for activities related to women's rights.

30. **Ms. Bethel** said it was commendable that the State party was employing temporary special measures based on specific objectives contained in its National Gender Policy Strategic Implementation Framework and Plan of 2008. Referring to the Community

Services, Women and Youth Employment Project, the aim of which was to create stop-gap jobs for unemployed persons and to train them in entrepreneurial development and the use of information and communication technology, she asked whether there was a legislative basis for that measure, how the measure was enforced, what specific inequality the measure was seeking to address, how the progress of the Project was monitored, how the State party planned to increase rural women's access to the Project and when the second phase of the Project would begin.

31. Turning to the Growing Girls and Women in Nigeria Project, which involved working with rural women cooperatives to produce rice and other products and providing women with vocational training, she asked how the measure was enforced, whether the impact of the measure was being monitored and, if so, what results had been achieved so far, what specific inequality the measure was seeking to address, and what percentage of the members of registered agricultural cooperatives were women. She would also like to learn more about how the State party used temporary special measures to mainstream a gender perspective in technical approaches to business development and a gender-sensitive approach to value chain development. Had any measures been taken to encourage women's investment in business in all sectors of the economy?

32. Noting that the draft national policy on internally displaced persons and the bill on the prohibition of discrimination against persons with disabilities were both still awaiting adoption, she asked whether a specific time frame for their adoption had been set.

33. **Ms. Jummai Alhassan** (Nigeria) said that, under the system of federalism, the federal government was unable to impose legislative change on state or local governments. Instead, the federal government encouraged acceptance of legislative change by conducting advocacy campaigns in the states, where the majority of Nigerians lived. Every piece of legislation enacted at the federal level had to be incorporated at the state level in order for it to apply to the majority of the population. To date, eight states and two local governments had adopted an action plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). A further three states had prepared a draft action plan. The federal government would continue its outreach to persuade more states to follow suit. The Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development had sought the assistance of the legislature and development partners such as UN-Women in making provision for the implementation of the second national action plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) in its budget. The federal government was pleased to report that, owing to its advocacy efforts, there had been an increase in the number of women participating in peace negotiations.

34. The federal government had undertaken several initiatives to empower women and to provide them with adequate means to support their livelihoods and their families, such as the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme, under which primary school children were guaranteed one nutritious meal a day, made with food sourced and cooked by rural women. The Conditional Cash Transfer Programme provided the poorest and most vulnerable households with financial assistance in an effort to lift them out of poverty. The Government Enterprise and Employment Programme provided female entrepreneurs living in rural areas with interest-free loans and other microfinance services on favourable terms. The purpose of the Women's Empowerment Fund was to help lift rural women out of poverty by providing capital to their businesses.

35. **Ms. Umar** (Nigeria) said that the successful implementation of the second national action plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) would largely depend on there being public acceptance and a sense of collective ownership of the document. There was already evidence to suggest that those conditions would be met, as various stakeholders had reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring the effective implementation of the action plan on the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of the resolution in 2015. A technical working group had been set up to oversee the implementation of the plan, which covered such government priority areas as advocacy, legislation and policy, capacity-building and service delivery, research, documentation and coordination. The second national action plan would cover the period from 2017 to 2020, after which a review would be conducted. The United Nations Office for West Africa and

the Sahel was also active in supporting the implementation of the second national action plan.

36. **Ms. Ekpere Eta** (Nigeria) said that a number of initiatives had been undertaken to empower and improve the skills of rural women. Since 2016, vocational training had been provided to some 8,000 rural women, who had learned skills such as plumbing, machinery repair and painting.

37. **Mr. Ladan** (Nigeria) said that a human rights desk had been set up in 2016 in the military services, with the cooperation of the European Union, to address and prevent human rights violations, including abuses arising from blanket military screening to identify persons suspected of being associated with the insurgency. Legislation to combat terrorism had been revised and the plan to counter terrorism and insurgency for the period 2016-2020 had been developed, with particular attention given to gender mainstreaming. Within the framework of the implementation of the Economic Community of West African States Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials, monitoring of the demand for and proliferation of small arms and light weapons was conducted by a national inter-agency security body, and the Government was funding other regional initiatives to that end.

38. **Ms. Jummai Alhassan** (Nigeria) said that, under an amnesty programme, many young persons had voluntarily surrendered their weapons. In addition to the national action plans for the implementation of the Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), local action plans had also been drawn up in the country's six geopolitical zones. During the Boko Haram insurgency, military officials had occupied schools, particularly in the North East, not for military operations but to prevent the insurgents from setting up camps in schools. Blanket screening of all persons found in a territory occupied by Boko Haram was the only means of identifying insurgents and ensuring they were detained. Women's needs were given priority during detention and screening, and they were generally not identified as insurgents. Following such screening, many persons had been released and were supported by women's groups and ministries at the state and federal levels.

39. **Ms. Rana** asked how the Government planned to deal with the violent clashes and deadly attacks arising from the competition for natural resources between farmers and herders in many areas of the country, which had had a dramatic impact on the lives and security of girls and women, particularly widows, who were often killed, raped or rendered homeless.

40. **Ms. Ameline** asked how budgetary allocations among the states could be increased given that existing policies were not sufficiently funded and how a more comprehensive approach could be developed to increase effective coordination with the state authorities. She asked whether more robust measures might be adopted with a view to ensuring effective implementation of national policies to prevent and protect the rights of Nigerian women. Strengthening the institutional and political rights of women would bolster the fight against the terrorists and extremists, who sought, on the contrary, to reduce women's roles and fundamental rights.

41. **Ms. Jummai Alhassan** (Nigeria) said that a committee headed by the Vice-President worked in close cooperation with state governments to ensure the effective implementation of social investment programmes for women. The Ministry of Budget and National Planning oversaw the assessment and monitoring of those programmes to ensure adequate resource allocation. The Government extended loans to women through the Government Enterprises Employment Programme under the Women's Empowerment Fund. Extrabudgetary resources had been allocated for assistance for girls who were released by Boko Haram. The conflict between farmers and herders was fuelled primarily by the Fulani, who crossed the borders with the support of local Fulani men and sought farmers' croplands to graze their cattle. The Government had therefore created grazing reserves and federal law enforcement authorities were sent to conflict areas to maintain public order. Committees had been set up at both the federal and state levels to address the problem, assess the possibility of compensation for families who had lost property and provide assistance to victims. The Government also worked with neighbouring countries to tighten border controls to prevent such conflict.

42. Measures had been adopted to combat gender-based discrimination and violence at the federal and state level, in cooperation with development partners. A committee had been established, with the participation of civil society and non-governmental organizations, to address the problem. The most significant obstacle was a lack of reporting of cases of discrimination or violence, and women were therefore encouraged to lodge complaints. The National Council for Women's Affairs, which involved all relevant stakeholders, including state ministries for women's affairs, civil society and non-governmental organizations, held discussions on the development of strategies and plans to enhance protection against gender-based discrimination.

43. **Ms. Rana**, highlighting the high numbers of women and girls who were subjected to all forms of violence, and welcoming the introduction of the Violence against Persons (Prohibition) Act, said that she was concerned about the persistence of patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted discriminatory stereotypes concerning women's roles that perpetuated women's subordination within the family and society. She wondered whether the Violence against Persons (Prohibition) Act applied outside the federal capital territory. She would appreciate information on the specific steps taken to enforce the Act in all states and to investigate and prosecute cases of violence against women and adolescent girls in schools. She would also welcome data showing whether the Act had helped reduce the incidence of harmful practices, stereotypes and other forms of violence against women. The failure to pass the gender and equal opportunities bill remained a matter of grave concern. She asked what measures had been taken or planned to assess the impact of the education and gender-related awareness-raising programmes at all levels and increase support for the relevant programmes among women's groups, local communities, traditional and religious leaders, prominent male figures, teachers and members of the media. Given that most shelters were operated by non-governmental organizations, she asked whether the Government envisaged establishing shelters in states other than those where Government-ran shelters already existed. She wondered whether there was a timeline and budget for the establishment of such shelters and how the Government planned to enhance its cooperation with the non-governmental organizations running shelters.

44. **Ms. Gabr** said that, despite various measures adopted to combat trafficking in persons, the problem persisted. She asked what accounted for the downgrading of the State party to a tier 2 watch-list country in the United States Department of State 2017 *Trafficking in Persons Report* and whether the relevant authorities were in a position to address the problem. She would be interested in learning what entities made up the National Agency for the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons and what budget had been earmarked for it. Given that the root causes of trafficking in persons in the State party were poverty and conflict and that both internal and external trafficking occurred, she would welcome details of how the strategies and action plans in place to tackle human trafficking addressed the issues of poverty and conflict. She would also like to know how the authorities were dealing with the problems of child soldiers, forced begging by children in Koranic schools and reports of corrupt officials involved in trafficking. She wondered why the funding had been reduced for the National Agency for the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons and for victim assistance. It was not clear whether a director of the National Agency for the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons had been appointed to replace the previous director who, according to reports, had been dismissed by the Government in 2016. She would appreciate further information on federal and state legislation concerning prostitution and what measures were taken to provide assistance for women sex workers. She would also be grateful if the delegation could comment on the situation of internally displaced persons in the country and on reports that certain officials were involved in the exploitation of those persons.

45. **Ms. Jummai Alhassan** (Nigeria) said that, based on the federal system, it was incumbent on states to incorporate the Violence against Persons (Prohibition) Act into their respective legislation, and the federal government had conducted advocacy drives to that end. The Gender and Equal Opportunities Act had already been incorporated into certain states' legislation.

46. With regard to the abuse of women and girls in the camps for internally displaced persons by government officials, she had personally met with young mothers and pregnant

women and girls in various camps, who had said that they had voluntarily engaged in relationships with men inside the camps. They maintained that they had been drugged by the men who, upon learning that the women or girls were pregnant, had abandoned them or denied having relations with them. The situation had much improved and in the camp in the Borno state capital, for example, men and women were separated, with special visiting times in common rooms for husbands and wives.

47. Child soldiers were recruited by the insurgents and not by the military. Children who were identified as having been exploited in that respect were returned to their families or, where they had no family, accommodated in shelters. Resources had been allocated from the federal budget to establish further shelters. Measures were adopted to ensure all states developed or expanded shelters for the protection of women and children. The Government distributed condoms to sex workers to protect the population against the risk of HIV/AIDS and other measures were carried out to prevent girls from entering prostitution.

48. **Ms. Chinenge** (Nigeria) said that the Government had recently appointed a new director general to the National Agency for the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons to spearhead the fight against human trafficking. After just a few months in the post, she had already launched the first public awareness-raising campaign on human trafficking and had taken steps to address the backlog in trafficking cases due before the courts. Despite a decrease in funding, the National Agency had increased its activity in the areas of combating trafficking, rescuing victims and prosecuting perpetrators. It was also involved in organizing a forthcoming public lecture to inform the public about trafficking, providing rehabilitation and counselling services to victims of trafficking through its nine shelters around the country and helping victims to gain access to loans to help them rebuild their lives.

49. **Ms. Rana** said that she wondered whether there were plans to make the current ad hoc approach to cooperation with religious leaders and men more permanent so as to bring about a change in mindsets.

50. **Ms. Gabr** said that she would be grateful if the delegation could clarify whether prostitution was expressly criminalized throughout the country, since it was stated in the list of replies that prostitution had been criminalized in some states but not at the federal level, which seemed to contradict the information provided by the delegation. She wished to know what action the National Agency for the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons was taking to address the root causes of prostitution and human trafficking. She would welcome specific information on the financial resources of the National Agency and its composition. Lastly, it would helpful to know whether the amended Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement Administration Act included provisions to increase sentences and remove the option for perpetrators to pay a fine rather than face imprisonment.

51. **Ms. Schulz**, while acknowledging the State party's efforts to prevent women from turning to prostitution, said that removing access to State services for prostitutes was rarely an effective deterrent, since the root causes of prostitution were linked to poverty, insufficient education and lack of employment opportunities. The Government's efforts to tackle HIV/AIDS prevalence rates were being undermined by the fact that prostitutes were denied access to health or social services and were not covered by HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment programmes. She was concerned at reports suggesting that sex workers in Nigeria were subjected to serious human rights violations, often perpetrated by law enforcement officers who abused their positions of power to rape, beat and torture them with impunity. She wished to know what action was being taken to prevent sex workers from being subjected to ill-treatment by law enforcement staff, ensure that any such violations were punished and amend the legal framework so as to prevent the issues of prostitution and sex trafficking from being conflated.

52. **Ms. Ameline** said that, in view of the huge migration flows faced by the State party, she wondered whether the international support and cooperation provided to the Government were sufficient and whether there was a need to strengthen North-South cooperation on the issue. It was clear that the trafficking networks were not only powerful but numerous.

53. **Ms. Jummai Alhassan** (Nigeria) said that all government agencies, including the National Agency for the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons, had had their budgets cut as a result of the economic recession. Under the 2015 Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement Administration Act, human trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation, including prostitution, had been criminalized; as a result, perpetrators of such offences were not eligible for State services or support. Complaints of human rights violations committed by law enforcement officers against sex workers were punishable and duly investigated. Lastly, the National Agency for the Control of HIV/AIDS was responsible for carrying out measures aimed at protecting all Nigerians. For example, it distributed condoms to sex workers in order to help prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

54. **Mr. Ladan** (Nigeria) said that the Violence against Persons (Prohibition) Act currently applied only to the Federal Capital Territory. In that light, efforts were under way to encourage states to enact similar legislation, and procedural guidelines on enforcement of that Act were currently being developed. Despite the fact that Nigeria had been downgraded to the United States Department of State tier 2 watch list for trafficking in persons, there had actually been an increase in the number of convictions and improved collaboration with, among others, the International Organization for Migration during the period under review.

55. **Ms. Chinenge** (Nigeria), providing an overview of the organizational structure and composition of the National Agency for the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons, said that a joint task force had been established in conjunction with the British Government to combat human trafficking. Within that framework, several staff members of the National Agency were due to fly to London's Heathrow and Gatwick airports to work with their British counterparts on measures to identify potential victims of trafficking and suspected traffickers. Lastly, it was an offence for law enforcement officers to subject victims of trafficking to ill-treatment. In that regard, a case against an officer was currently being heard by the courts.

Articles 7 to 9

56. **Ms. Bethel** said that she wished to know what specific measures had been taken by the State party to achieve the 35 per cent gender quota for appointed and elected positions and thus increase women's participation in political and public life. Referring to the Women's Trust Fund, which had been established in 2010 to help support aspiring women political candidates, she wondered how many women had benefited from that Fund, what the application procedure involved and whether it was a fair and transparent process that was open to all. In that connection, she invited the delegation to comment on reports that some funding had been used to dissuade some candidates from running in elections.

57. She would welcome information regarding the State party's gender mainstreaming strategies, particularly in relation to increasing women's representation on local councils and in the private sector, and the monitoring mechanisms responsible for overseeing their implementation. Reports indicated that women with disabilities in particular were underrepresented in public and political life. She would therefore be interested to know whether any temporary special measures had been implemented to increase the participation of women with disabilities and women from other vulnerable groups, such as rural women and older women.

58. Regarding article 8 of the Convention, she asked how many women occupied positions in the diplomatic service and what training and other measures were available to enable women to represent their country as diplomats or in regional and international organizations. Lastly, additional data on the proportion of women occupying roles in trade unions, chambers of commerce and professional associations would be useful, as would details of any measures taken to increase women's representation in those areas.

59. **Ms. Nadaraia** said that she wished to know whether the State party had set a specific time frame for the repeal of discriminatory legal and constitutional provisions, including article 26 (2) of the Constitution, which did not allow a Nigerian woman to transmit her nationality to her foreign spouse on the same basis as a Nigerian man, and

article 29 (4), which stated that a woman was deemed to be of the age of majority upon marriage, thereby encouraging early and child marriages and their consequences. It was difficult to understand why persons under the age of 18, who did not have the right to vote, should be able to renounce their citizenship based on the fact that that they had married early in life. She wished to know what measures the State party envisaged to ensure the full enjoyment of women's rights and freedoms, including with regard to citizenship and the eligibility to run for public office, on an equal footing with men, irrespective of their marital status or state of origin.

60. **Ms. Jummai Alhassan** (Nigeria) said that a bill to amend the Constitution and enable women to transmit their nationality to a foreign spouse had not been adopted by the current legislature but would be revisited in the future. Regarding eligibility to run for political office, any person could contest an election as long as they had lived in the state they intended to represent for at least 12 months. With regard to the 35 per cent affirmative action quota under the National Gender Policy, since it had not been enshrined in law, it was not legally enforceable. As such, it would take time to bring about the necessary change in mindsets and ensure compliance with the quota. Efforts were, however, being taken to further improve women's political participation. For example, there were plans to lobby for greater women's representation in the main political parties and to involve the national electoral body in measures to increase women's participation in public and political life. In that connection, women political candidates were automatically contacted by the Women's Trust Fund and provided with funding.

61. **Ms. Omidiran** (Nigeria) said that the House of Representatives was committed to improving the country's compliance with its international obligations and had established a good working relationship with the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development with a view to improving the implementation and raising awareness of the provisions of the Convention. By way of example, a women's parliamentary committee in the House of Representatives was currently putting together a proposal to establish gender quotas for elected positions under the law. It was hoped that doing so would greatly improve women's participation in political life.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.